Didier Found Guilty, Says He'll Stay Sheriff

MARKSVILLE, La. (AP) — Sheriff F. O. Didier Jr., of Avoyelles Parish, convicted Wednesday of malfeasance in office in connection with a robbery in the parish courthouse, says he'll continue to run his office.

Didier remained free today on bond after District Judge Earl Edwards found the sheriff guilty. The judge said he would consult with attorneys before issuing the sentence.

"I've been sheriff for 14 years and I have made all my decisions, and I am going to continue to run my office the way I see fit," Didier said.

THE CHARGE stems from an alleged robbery in which Louis Golden, a Baton Rouge scrap dealer, lost $21,000 last May.

—AP WIREPHOTO

SHERIFF F. O. DIDIER JR.

Golden testified he took the cash to Marksville to cover what he thought was a deal to buy 52,000 pounds of scrap copper confiscated by the sheriff's office.

Golden said he was in the courthouse with two men, one of whom testified he was disguised as a deputy, when Golden was slugged over the head and later awoke to find the money gone.

Didier was accused of having knowledge of a conspiracy to bilk Golden and taking no action in the matter.

The dealer said the sheriff refused to do anything about a complaint he filed in Marksville, with an East Baton Rouge Parish deputy sheriff looking on.

BEFORE THE trial began a month ago, Didier had gone to court to seek the recusal of Dist. Atty. Charles Riddle Jr. in the case.

After two lower court denials, the Louisiana Supreme Court refused to review the decisions and denied Didier's motion for a continuation of arraignment.

However, Riddle left most of the prosecution to his assistant, John Ab Boatner.

Didier also faces charges of theft and aiding in attempts to commit theft in connection with a confidence scheme to bilk scrap dealers.

More than 52 million visitors have ascended the Washington Monument since it was opened to the public in 1888.